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to the engraver, Mr. William Dougal. But we are confident that much is due to his own facile pencil, as well as to his superintendence. Having by this and by other works done so much for the before neglected department of botany to which he has devoted himself, we may fairly call upon him to do more, and to render the study of our mosses popular, or at least practicable to our botanical students in general, and even to amateurs, by means of a general account of the North American species, more full and easy than that which he has already contributed to Gray's Manual, and with figures of a considerable portion of the commoner Mosses.

19. — *An American Dictionary of the English Language.* By NOAH WEBSTER, LL. D. Thoroughly revised and greatly enlarged and improved by CHAUNCEY A. GOODRICH, D. D., LL. D., &c., &c., and NOAH PORTER, D. D., &c., &c. Springfield: G. & C. Merriam. 1864. 4to. pp. lxxii., 1768.

THE good Dr. Webster would be startled if he could see a copy of his Dictionary shorn of all his Semitic etymologies, and fuller of pictures than a primer. In many respects, however, this new edition is an improvement on its predecessors, and in the etymological part it is undoubtedly the best English Dictionary existing. But we cannot help thinking that the general plan is a bad one. If it were intended to make it a complete dictionary of the English language, it should have been fuller; if a convenient volume for reference, less full. A complete dictionary would be a history of the language, for it would contain every word that had ever been used, with its changes and the dates of them, — would be, in short, what Grimm's great work will be for Germany, and Littré's for France. The volume before us contains a great many obsolete and unusual words, — some that have been used, perhaps, only once; it incorporates provincialisms from Halliwell and Bartlett, and yet by no means exhausts the stock whether of archaisms, oddities, or vulgarisms. Then for the illustrations (except where they are geometrical figures or the like), they are not only worthless, but a positive nuisance. They make the book bigger and the print smaller. They are ugly, poorly engraved, and fitter for a spelling-book than a dictionary. What can be the need of giving us a picture of the dial of a clock in a country where every house contains one? of the American flag, looking as no banner ever looked out of a wood-cut or a patriotic poem? of the Colossus of Rhodes bestriding the harbor, while the small print beneath assures us there is no authority for supposing that he ever bestrode it at all? We can conceive of people who would be pleased with

the drawing of a cork, but who would care for the picture of a cork-screw, as we have it here? All the prints, moreover, are repeated again with some additions at the end of the volume, thus increasing the number of pages by seventy of pure impertinence. As illustrations they are mostly childish and often erroneous. A palpable owl sat for the portrait of *Falco peregrinus*, and the *Merganser* has a hooked beak, though the accompanying description says, rightly enough, that it should be straight. Surely this is a book with pretty pictures for baby to learn his letters by, and not a dictionary. At best, the greater part of the illustrations belong more properly to an encyclopædia than a lexicon; and since a single volume cannot suffice for both, it would be better not to do at all what must be done inadequately. As it is, the wood-cuts of machinery, to take a single example, are too small to be of any use, and yet large enough to be very much in the way.

Of course, into such a sea of words we have only dropped our lead here and there, without choice, and generally we have found safe hold-ing-ground. But one or two animadversions occur to us. We think that the illustrative quotations are not so well chosen as they might be, and that they are used too often in cases where no such helps to the understanding are needed. One can hardly turn to a page of Dr. Johnson's Dictionary without finding some pithy or pregnant sentence; but here a majority of the citations we have chanced upon strike us as trivial. For example, we open at random on the verb *to drum*, and find "drumming with his fingers on the arm of his chair. *W. Irving*." Again, words are given which are not in any sense English, and which do not become so because they have been used by such a writer as Sir Thomas Browne (who, by the way, might have furnished a grandly imaginative illustration of the word *drum*), a writer who was in the habit of coining a word out of Latin or Greek as he wanted it. Nor should Feltham be cited as an authority at all. He is a thoroughly third-rate writer, and his style is measly with Latinisms, if such barbarous stuff as *superbiate*, *superinsaniate*, *subhumerate*, *indulciate*, *replenty*, *temulentine*, may be called so. These words, it is true, have not been taken up in the editorial drag-net, but such a school-boy as this should not be appealed to at all. With Browne it is otherwise, for he was a master of English when he chose to translate himself into it.

In turning over the leaves, we are struck with the huddles of scientific warts with which the fair body of our language is getting studded. We suppose there is no help for it, that we must submit to have

"Those rugged names to our like mouths grow sleek";

but we cannot help shuddering when we think how endless are the

plants, stones, and what-not yet to be named on land, that the sea has as many more, and that some improvement of the microscope may show the palpable air as populous. And then the terrible name of the discoverer may be inflicted on some innocent herb or mineral. Fancy Gerstaeckeria or Schlagintweitite ! We see no good reason why these innocents should be "Nicodemused into nothing" any more than their betters. But if the process go on at the present rate, we shall have to dredge for our English among this scientific silt of the dictionary. We are inclined to think that it would be better to arrange such words under a separate alphabet, or even in a volume by itself, so that we may get the wholesome roots of our mother tongue untainted with all this apothecary stuff. The words which have grown from living germs, and those which have been made and stuck together, should be kept apart.

We have already spoken in praise of the etymological part of the work, done by Dr. Mahn of Berlin. It is remarkably well done, weeded of all surplusage and Babel impertinence, — sometimes, we think, left almost too naked. We have noticed a few etymologies which we think questionable ; but these are matter of opinion, and generally we have had no English dictionary nearly so good in this respect. But can that be called *American* which is done in Germany, or for which an American pays his money ? We think the nationality of the title-page should be a little less exclusive.

Among the definitions, we have stumbled upon some which seem to us either inadequate or utterly mistaken. Under the verb *lay*, we have as one of the meanings, "to prevent from manifesting itself, as a spirit." We suppose "from *further* manifesting itself" is meant. "Davy Jones's locker" is said to mean the ocean, and W. Irving cited as authority. "Fall of timber" is defined as the "act of *felling* or cutting down." Ben Jonson would have been surprised to hear that Volpone's *fricace* was "an unguent prepared by *frying* things together." Under *insane*, the third definition is "making mad ; causing madness," with the quotation from Shakespeare,

"Or have we eaten of the *insane* root
That takes the reason prisoner."

This is making the master of language say, "have we eaten of the maddening root that maddens." Insane here merely means *unwholesome*. Worse than this, we find under *gracious* the third definition, "beautiful, graceful"; and again a verse credited to Shakespeare, —

"So hallowed and so gracious is that *tune* !"

In what play this line occurs, we cannot say ; but there is another so

like it in Hamlet that we suspect a sophistication. Under *gust* we have: "2. Gratification of any kind, particularly that which is exquisitely relished; enjoyment." The illustration is from Pope,

"Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,"

who is also made wrongfully guilty of tautology. *Gust* means here the pleasure of eating as distinguished from that of merely hunting, and belongs under definition number one, "the sense or pleasure of tasting; relish." One of the meanings of *gust* is not given at all, — the *act* of tasting. Again, where Chapman says,

"The roots of hills and *herby* valleys,"

he is made to mean "covered with *herbs*." Covered with herbage, grassy, was, of course, what he intended. Under the word *card* we do not find the definition *chart*, which was one of the commonest of its obsolete meanings. Under *renew* we find: "2. To begin again.

The last great age *renews* its finished course. *Dryden*.

3. To repeat either exactly or almost exactly; to go over again.

The birds their notes *renew*. *Milton*.

4. To furnish again; as to *renew* a loan, a note, or the like." In the first two instances, both Milton and Dryden mean precisely the same thing, and *to take up again* would be the better definition. The true etymology of the word in these cases is not *re* and *new*, as we are told by the Dictionary, but the French *renouer*, from a wholly different root.

We have said that some of the etymologies did not satisfy us. We chance upon one too ridiculous to be passed by. "PRY, *v. i.* [probably contracted from *per-eye*, to eye or look through.]"! We have noted a few others; but as we do not pretend to have read the volume through, we content ourselves with saying that there is need yet of more careful revision in this respect.

Among the appendices to the Dictionary is one both curious and useful, by Mr. W. A. Wheeler, being "a vocabulary of the names of noted fictitious persons and places." It is in some sort what may be called a dictionary of literary allusion. We have noticed very few oversights in it, and we think even the most omnivorous reader will be surprised at its fulness and accuracy. It is a truly valuable addition to the Dictionary; for many names become proverbial, surviving the books, and especially the plays, from which they are borrowed.

This Dictionary, so far as we have observed, is printed with great accuracy, a high merit in these days, when the press all over the world, with few exceptions, is growing every day more careless.